

SCHERTZ POLICE DEPARTMENT
HOME ALARM SYSTEMS
INFORMATION

Home alarm systems can be an effective crime prevention tool for many homeowners. They add an extra layer of protection against unwanted intrusion and they also provide the homeowner some peace of mind. Home alarm systems vary in type and quality. Before purchasing a home alarm system, here are some things to consider.

1. The average home alarm system, professionally installed, runs about \$600 - \$700.
2. The average do-it yourself home alarm system can be much cheaper.
3. Know what you want. The options are many and the homeowner has the advantage of selection and suppliers.
4. Do you want intrusion detection only, or do you want fire and smoke detection, water leak detection, etc?
5. Do you want a monthly monitoring service? Costs vary from about \$30 - \$50 a month and the responses vary.
6. Find out if responses are telephone only or the dispatching of an alarm company representative who may either be armed or unarmed.
7. Find out where the monitoring station is located – locally or out of state.
8. Find out the qualifications of those installing your system and monitoring your alarm.
9. Find out how many responders are on duty and what the average response time is.
10. Find out what happens if you move or want to cancel your service.
11. Compare prices and service. Ask for written proposals that spell out everything from length of service that you are getting, to maintenance and repair procedures, etc.
12. Seek a licensed state contractor.
13. Check with the Better Business Bureau.
14. Get recommendations from neighbors, friends, or family.
15. Check out what is available from home improvement stores, electronic stores, security catalogs, etc.
16. Learn basic before shopping. The Internet is a great resource.
17. Consider your needs and the ease and convenience for use. Your system should be family friendly and not intimidating.
18. Consider having a second control panel and / or panic button installed in the master bedroom.
19. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Don't be pressured into a purchase.
20. Find out what happens to your system in times of power outages. Battery back up?
21. Ask your home insurance company about discounts for home security efforts.
22. Make sure to purchase your alarm permit and keep it valid each year.

Stephen O. Starr, Chief of Police